



## REPORT: Playground Strategy for Dubbo Regional Council

**DIVISION:** Liveability  
**REPORT DATE:** 6 February 2022  
**TRIM REFERENCE:** ID22/206

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

| Purpose                | Addressing Council resolution      Strategic Project Update                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Issue                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>This report addresses a Council resolution regarding Playground Strategy for Dubbo that sought advice on the current playground strategy implemented across the Dubbo local government area. Current and future playgrounds (and similar facilities) across the Dubbo local government area are identified, as is the current and potential funding strategies to ensure an equitable distribution throughout Dubbo Regional Council.</li></ul> |                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Reasoning              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>To provide the information requested by Council at the 27 January 2022 meeting.</li></ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Financial Implications | Budget Area                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Recreation and Open Space                                                                                                                                                                             |
|                        | Funding Source                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Capital renewal and acquisitions                                                                                                                                                                      |
|                        | Proposed Cost                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Dependent on renewal schedule                                                                                                                                                                         |
|                        | Ongoing Costs                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Maintenance - Material costs \$664 p.a. per playground.<br>Defect resolution - \$27,897 p.a.<br>Inspections - \$4,550 - \$5,500 p.a.<br>Renewal – dependent on playground level and renewal schedule. |
| Policy Implications    | Policy Title                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | There are no policy implications arising from this report.                                                                                                                                            |

### STRATEGIC DIRECTION

The 2040 Community Strategic Plan is a vision for the development of the region out to the year 2040. The Plan includes five principle themes and a number of strategies and outcomes. This report is aligned to:

|                            |                                                                                                                                  |
|----------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Theme:                     | 5 Liveability                                                                                                                    |
| CSP Objective:             | 5.5 The community has the opportunity to participate in a diverse range of lifestyle, sporting and passive recreational pursuits |
| Delivery Program Strategy: | 5.5.1 Access to recreation and cultural facilities for young people is improved                                                  |

|                            |                                                                                                                                  |
|----------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Theme:                     | 5 Liveability                                                                                                                    |
| CSP Objective:             | 5.5 The community has the opportunity to participate in a diverse range of lifestyle, sporting and passive recreational pursuits |
| Delivery Program Strategy: | 5.5.2 Quality passive and active open space is located to maximise access and use by the community                               |
| Theme:                     | 5 Liveability                                                                                                                    |
| CSP Objective:             | 5.5 The community has the opportunity to participate in a diverse range of lifestyle, sporting and passive recreational pursuits |
| Delivery Program Strategy: | 5.5.3 Unique recreational facilities and opportunity are available                                                               |

#### RECOMMENDATION

1. That Council continues to actively pursue non-rate revenue for the renewal of playground assets, fitness nodes and associate recreation facilities to reduce the financial burden on Council of providing these facilities to our communities.
2. That the playground hierarchy, identified in this report be endorsed and continued to be implemented across the Dubbo regional local government area.

*John Watts*  
Director Liveability

*IM*  
Manager Recreation and  
Open Space

## BACKGROUND

### Previous Resolutions of Council

|                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 27 January 2022              | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. That the CEO provide a report to Council identifying the current playground strategy for Dubbo Regional Council.</li><li>2. That as inclusions in the report the current number, type (e.g. playgrounds and fitness equipment) distribution, age and level (Regional, District or Local) of these facilities be identified as well as any future playgrounds that are proposed.</li><li>3. That any funding strategies or initiatives that can be implemented to ensure a more equitable and accessible spread of playgrounds across the local government area be addressed in the body of the report.</li></ol> |
| 28 October 2021<br>(in part) | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>2. That suitable fencing be installed around the new Victoria Park Playground.</li><li>5. That any shortfall in the delivery of the Victoria Park Playspace be funded through the reallocation of funds for the Southlakes Playspace and that a new playground for Southlakes be considered in the development of the 2022/2023 Operational Plan and Budget.</li><li>6. That \$72,500 be reallocated to Cameron Park playground for a suitable fence subject to Community Consultation.</li></ol>                                                                                                                   |

## REPORT

Playgrounds are an important component of the open space network across Dubbo Regional Council. They provide opportunities for children to develop strength, coordination, confidence and social skills that they then carry throughout their lives. Playgrounds also encourage intergenerational interaction that helps to cement familial bonds.

Around 1994/1995 a park hierarchy system was developed for Dubbo City Council that identified the level of park and the type of sub-assets (including playgrounds) that would be, or typically be found at each level. Following the 2016 amalgamation this asset hierarchy was overlaid across the Wellington park system.

This system was based on a three tier system encompassing Regional, District and Local playgrounds.

- Regional level playgrounds have a large catchment of 30 km radius, provide a diverse range of play equipment for all ages and abilities and associated amenities. They are considered a “destination” and are often associated with other attractions.
- District level playgrounds have a catchment of 2km radius, provide a smaller range of playground equipment that is still based on providing equitable facilities to all ages and abilities.
- Local level playgrounds have a catchment of 400 metre radius with the view that all children have play facilities within a reasonable walking distance from their place of

residence. Generally these have a small range of play equipment that is based on the more traditional elements of swings, slides, spring rockers and other similar items.

An important factor in the development of this hierarchy was the provision of playgrounds across all sectors of our community.

Following the 2016 amalgamation this same hierarchical approach has been progressively implemented across the new local government area.

Dubbo Regional Council has 34 playgrounds consisting of three Regional, six District and 25 Local playgrounds. These are supported by 11 fitness centres (10 in Dubbo and one in Geurie), three skate parks (Dubbo, Wellington and Geurie) and a water park (Dubbo). In value this asset class exceeds \$8.5 million. Playground replacement is typically 15 – 20 years, dependent on usage and regular condition assessment. As of 2020/2021, only three playgrounds are outside their scheduled renewal date: Lions Park West, Theresa Maliphant and Teamster's Park. Lions Park West is currently identified for replacement in 2025/2026 and Theresa Maliphant has been deferred until the completion of upgrade works at the Dubbo hospital. A funding strategy for the replacement of Teamster's Park is still to be developed.

Victoria Park was at the end of its useful life, with works scheduled to commence late February/early March.

All of the major villages have a Local level playground, with the exception of Brocklehurst and Eumungerie. Council has secured funding for the Brocklehurst playground through the NSW Government Stronger Country Communities Fund Round 3. This playground is anticipated to be installed by September 2022. A list of all Dubbo Regional Council playgrounds, fitness centres, skate parks and the Elston Park water play area is shown in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Playground listing for Dubbo Regional Council.

| Location        | Park name            | Street                                 | Level    | Date | Age - 2021 |
|-----------------|----------------------|----------------------------------------|----------|------|------------|
| Dubbo (East)    | Elizabeth Street     | Windsor Parade                         | Regional | 2019 | 3          |
| Dubbo (Central) | Victoria Park        | Talbragar & Darling streets            | Regional | 2007 | 14         |
| Wellington      | Cameron Park         | Nanima Crescent                        | Regional | 2021 | 1          |
| Dubbo (West)    | Delroy Park          | Dalbeattie Crescent                    | District | 2013 | 8          |
| Dubbo (Central) | Elston Park          | Cobra and Gipps streets                | District | 2015 | 7          |
| Dubbo (West)    | Lions Park West      | Stonehaven Avenue)                     | District | 2000 | 21         |
| Dubbo (Central) | Macquarie Lions Park | Bligh Street (near VIC)                | District | 2020 | 1          |
| Dubbo (South)   | Wahroonga Park       | Macquarie and Brisbane streets (south) | District | 2018 | 3          |
| Dubbo (East)    | Wambool Park         | Shoalhaven Parkway                     | District | 2006 | 15         |

|                              |                              |                                       |              |             |            |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------|-------------|------------|
| Dubbo (West)                 | Algona Park                  | Algona Street                         | Local        | 2018        | 3          |
| Dubbo (East)                 | Arboreteum                   | Cobra Street (Orana Mall)             | Local        | 2011        | 12         |
| Ballimore                    | Ballimore (Oval)             | Goan Creek Road                       | Local        | 2007        | 14         |
| Ballimore                    | Thelma Pelosi Park           | Federation Street                     | Local        | 2014        | 11         |
| Dubbo (East)                 | Buckingham Drive Park        | Buckingham Drive (East)               | Local        | 2015        | 7          |
| Dubbo (Central)              | Daphne Park                  | Bultje & Strickland streets           | Local        | 2017        | 5          |
| Dubbo (East)                 | Jack William Park            | Jack William Drive (East)             | Local        | 2014        | 7          |
| Dubbo (East)                 | Jubilee Park                 | Jubilee Street (south)                | Local        | 2008        | 14         |
| Dubbo (East)                 | Lunar Park                   | Myall and Apollo streets              | Local        | 2016        | 5          |
| Dubbo (East)                 | Manera Heights Park          | Sloman Close & Lindsay Parade         | Local        | 2014        | 8          |
| Dubbo (East)                 | Michael Duffy Park           | Bell Avenue (East)                    | Local        | 2013        | 9          |
| Dubbo (North)                | Muller Park                  | b/w Park and Brisbane streets (north) | Local        | 2019        | 2          |
| Dubbo (North)                | Powter Park                  | Myall & Gipps streets (north)         | Local        | 2014        | 7          |
| Dubbo (South)                | South Dubbo Park             | Palmer Street (south)                 | Local        | 2012        | 9          |
| Dubbo (West)                 | Spears Drive Park            | Burge Place                           | Local        | 2016        | 5          |
| Dubbo (North)                | Theresa Maliphant Park       | Cobbora Road & Myall Street           | Local        | 1993        | 29         |
| Wongarbon                    | Centenary Park               | Boberah & Beni Street                 | Local        | 2018        | 3          |
| Euchareena                   | Max Sinclair Oval            | Walter Street                         | Local        | 2018        | 2          |
| Stuart Town                  | Moxon Park                   | Molong Street                         | Local        | 2018        | 3          |
| Mumbil                       | Mumbil Oval                  | Naroogal & Cudgegong Streets          | Local        | *2008       | 13         |
| Wellington                   | Lions Park Wellington        | William & Maxwell Streets             | Local        | 2019        | 2          |
| Wellington (Montefiores)     | Teamsters*                   | Montefiores & Lay Streets             | Local        | 1999        | 23         |
| Geurie                       | Tom Culkin Oval              | Mitchell & Wellington Streets         | Local        | 2018        | 3          |
| Wellington                   | Walker Crescent Park         | Walker Crescent                       | Local        | 2019        | 2          |
| Wellington (Montefiores)     | Bicentennial                 | Eucalyptus Drive                      | Local        | 2019        | 2          |
| <b>Fitness Nodes / Parks</b> |                              |                                       | <b>Level</b> | <b>Date</b> | <b>Age</b> |
| Dubbo (North)                | Barden Park Fitness          | Gipps & Myall Streets                 | Regional     | 2020        | 1          |
| Dubbo (South)                | Regand Park Nodes            | Tamworth Street x 4 Nodes             | Regional     | 2019        | 2          |
| Dubbo (Central)              | Riverbank Foreshores Fitness | Bligh Street                          | District     | 2012        | 9          |
| Dubbo (West)                 | Sir Roden Cutler Park        | Whylandra Street (NINJA COURSE)       | District     | 2020        | 1          |

|                    |                          |                                      |              |             |            |
|--------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------|-------------|------------|
| Geurie             | Tom Culkin Oval          | Wellington Street                    | Local        | 2020        | 1          |
| Dubbo (West)       | Sir Roden Cutler Park    | Whylandra Street<br>(FITNESS CENTRE) | District     | 2015        | 6          |
| Dubbo<br>(Central) | Victoria Park            | Victoria Lane                        | Regional     | 2006        | 15         |
| Dubbo<br>(Central) | Victoria Park (no 2)     | Gipps Street (FITNESS<br>CENTRE)     | Regional     | 2017        | 3          |
| <b>Skate Parks</b> |                          |                                      | <b>Level</b> | <b>Date</b> | <b>Age</b> |
| Dubbo<br>(Central) | Victoria Park            | Talbragar Street                     | Regional     | 2008        | 13         |
| Geurie             | Tom Culkin Oval          | Wellington Street                    | Local        | 2017        | 4          |
| Wellington         | Wellington Skate<br>Park | Showground Road                      | Local        | 2009        | 12         |
| <b>Water Park</b>  |                          |                                      | <b>Level</b> | <b>Date</b> | <b>Age</b> |
| Dubbo<br>(Central) | Elston Park              | Cobra Street                         | District     | 2007        | 14         |



Figure 1. Regional Playgrounds – Dubbo Regional Council – 30 km radius



**Figure 2.** Playground hierarchy for Dubbo. Red = Regional (see above). Orange = District (2km radius) and Local (400m radius). Blue = proposed playgrounds. Green = Developer.

The blue circle in the west is centred on land that Dubbo Regional Council has identified as a new recreational facility encompassing a playground, amenities, and playing fields with supporting facilities. Community consultation was undertaken in 2020 that was only limited to the playground placement and design. It did not have spatial context with regards to the additional facilities that were being proposed at the time. However with the land immediately north of the site (corner of Joira and Minore roads) being identified for a new sub-division and the area to the west of Joira Road being earmarked for future residential expansion, a revised master plan is being prepared for community consultation.

The blue circle in the south east quadrant was the site of a proposed playground that was to be installed 2021/2022. Following community consultation regarding the new playground at Victoria Park, commencing late February, Council reallocated the funds to fence the playground (28 October 2021). Funds were also allocated for a fence at Cameron Park playground, Wellington, subject to community consultation. As part of the development of the 2022/2023 Operation Plan and Budget funding for a playground at Southlakes is to be considered, as resolved by Council on 28 October 2021.

The green circle in the south east quadrant is a playground that the Developer is required to install as part of the ongoing development of the estate. Discussions between Council Officers and the Developer have been ongoing regarding the level (District), style and timing of this playground.



**Figure 3.** Playground hierarchy for Wellington. Red = Regional (see **Figure 1**) and Yellow = Local (400m radius).

Funding for playground renewal is scheduled and identified within forward budgets, and through the asset management plan for Liveability. This is supported through a proactive approach in seeking in sourcing external funding for the development and renewal of playgrounds. This success is shown in **Table 2**.

| Year    | Park                               | Funding Source                      | Amount      |
|---------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------|
| 2019    | Walker Crescent Park (Wellington)  | Family and Community Services       | \$39,000    |
| 2016    | Euchareena                         | Stronger Communities Fund 1         | \$50,000    |
| 2016    | Stuart Town                        | Stronger Communities Fund 1         | \$50,000    |
| 2016    | Elizabeth Park (Dubbo East)        | Stronger Communities Fund           | \$1,000.000 |
| 2020    | Brocklehurst                       | Stronger Country Communities Fund 3 | \$80,000    |
| 2017/18 | Geurie (skate park)                | Stronger Country Communities        | \$245,000   |
| 2020    | Lions Park (Wellington)            | Infigen Energy                      | \$65,000    |
| 2020    | Sir Roden Cutler Park (Dubbo West) | ClubDubbo                           | \$250,000   |

|           |                                    |                              |           |
|-----------|------------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------|
|           |                                    | Titan Macquarie Mud Run      | \$50,000  |
|           |                                    | My Community Fund            | \$200,000 |
| 2019/2020 | Cameron Park                       | Stronger Communities Fund    | \$280,000 |
|           |                                    | Every One Can Play           | \$193,000 |
| 2020      | Geurie Playground / Fitness Centre | Stronger Country Communities | \$245,000 |

**Table 2.** External funding support for the development and renewal of playgrounds

Dubbo Regional Council also has a current application through the State Government for the renewal of the tennis court surface at Teamster's Park.

This ongoing proactive identification and submission of non-rate revenue to support the renewal of the playground assets and other recreational facilities will continue to ensure high quality and relevant facilities, and reduce the financial burden on Council.

### Consultation

The original consultation in the development of the playground hierarchy pre-dates the amalgamation, and occurred around 1994/1995 as part of the development of the Strategic Asset Management Plan (SAMP) that evolved into the Defined Asset Management Policy (DAMP). The SAMP categorised the park system into Regional, District, Local and General Community assets that identified the type of sub-assets (including playgrounds) would be, or typically be found at each level. Following the 2016 amalgamation this asset hierarchy was overlaid across the Wellington park system.

As part of a broader internal project "Public Open Space Guidelines" have been drafted and distributed internally across all Divisions and relevant sections of Council for comment. Included in the guidelines is an area that specifically addresses the issue of playgrounds, their spatial distribution, style, accessibility and associated facilities such as amenities. The intent of the document is to assist Council Officers and Developers in the identification and provision of "fit for purpose" public open space that meets the needs of our communities in a cost efficient and manageable (maintenance) way.

Once feedback is received from the internal stakeholders and the document reviewed/amended the next step in the process will be a presentation through to Executive Leadership Team for further comment.

### Resourcing Implications

Under the Dubbo Regional Council – Liveability Asset Management Plan playgrounds are typically renewed every 15 – 20 years. Funding for these renewals are identified initially through the Asset Management Plan that flows into the development of the Recreation and Open Space budgets. A proactive approach is taken by the Division / Branch to offset the cost of the replacement of these assets, as shown in **Table 2**.

The ongoing upkeep of the playgrounds can differ greatly and is dependent on the type of playground (traditional versus adventure play), play equipment (timber versus steel elements) and type of softfall use (rubber versus bark chip or sand).

A proactive approach is taken in determining the best value playground for the community, taking in their needs as well as the capital and recurrent costs in their provision.

To provide some context of the costs involved on maintaining these asset group, the following information has been provided by Liveability Operations.

For 2020/2021/2022\*

Average material cost to maintain playgrounds is \$664 per playground per year.

Softfall is the single biggest cost per playground averaging \$17,760 on softfall purchase per year (graded bark).

Over the past 2.5 calendar years we have spent \$23,743, \$27,848 and \$18,152\* per year on playground defect resolution.

Quarterly Inspections come at 30min per playground per quarter x 35 Playgrounds = 70 hours per year.

Overall the playground strategy currently employed by Council is continuing to ensure equitable access to these assets across the local government area.

Due to the implementation of the asset renewal schedule for these playgrounds the condition of these playgrounds, and similar facilities, continue to be high and meet the needs of our communities. The recent successes in obtaining non-rate revenue has assisted in implementing this schedule whilst reducing the financial burden on Council.